

# FUTURIST EMPRESSIONS FIELD NOTES

INTERVIEWER Candacy Taylor  
INTERVIEWEES: Nzinga Foreman-Bey & Folasade Bey Al-Rasul  
DATE & TIME: August 24, 2012 1:00pm  
  
LOCATION: Futurist Empressions  
5706 Thomas Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Nzinga and Folasade Bey work out of their family house in south Philadelphia. They were trained by master braider Yvette Smalls and specialize in traditional and modern African hairstyling. Their home salon is located in a lower-income neighborhood and there was a lot of construction going the day I arrived. I had a hard time getting to their street because so many streets were blocked off due to construction. Some blocks felt abandoned while others were more populated. The block the Beys live on felt comfortable and welcoming. I arrived around 1pm. I walked in and saw a man sitting under a hairdryer with long dreadlocks. Their mother was sitting at a desk with a brightly colored red and black striped African dress. The walls of the home salon were painted a bright yellow and African artwork was placed throughout the space. Folasade greeted me with a big smile and a hug. I started to unpack the equipment while Nzinga arrived with her daughters. Shortly after, Folasade and Nzinga's hair models arrived and I photographed them doing hair.

While I was photographing Nzinga and Folasade they explained the hair techniques and styling decisions they made. They used things such as feathers, raffia and pipe cleaners to adorn the hair and they spoke eloquently about the importance of keeping black hair in its natural state. I photographed them doing hair until about 3pm. After the hair models left we sat down to do the interview. Their mother and Nzinga's children were quietly sitting in the other room. The interview lasted about an hour and a half. I was very moved by their story and they were grateful to be a part of the project. We exchanged hugs and I left around 4:45pm.